

drama

'Loot', 'Clown' open at Carnival

this week



The beautiful dolls in "The Clown Who Ran Away"

Photo by Kathie Fujisaka

"It's a sad and funny story, with a lot of action and music, with a little nostalgia thrown in."

That's the recipe for Carnival Theater's second children's play, "The Clown Who Ran Away," as described by the play's director, Ian McIver.

The play, which appeals to pre-school age children as well as older theatergoers, follows Dodo, a clown, on an exciting adventure during which he becomes enchanted with a beautiful doll. The clown is accused of stealing the favored doll and the other dolls belonging to the world's greatest doll-makers, "Mr. Frumpkins and Andrew."

But, the play has a happy ending with the dolls returning to their owners and Dodo returning to his circus, "where he feels he belongs."

The play will be performed at 11 a.m. today, and next Wednesday and Thursday at 11 a.m. Tickets are 75 cents.

"You will either hate 'Loot' or like it a lot. But, don't take your Aunt Mildred—especially if she has just died." That description of Carnival Theater's "Loot," by the New York Times' Clive Barnes, is the most accurate description that director Betty Bernhard can think of for the play, which opens Friday.

The play, written by the British playwright Joe Orton in 1967, is a "black, black comedy," according to Bernhard, who says, "Here is the only place in Oregon where it could be performed, because it's so outrageous. I can't imagine anyone else doing it."

"Loot's" plot, described by Bernhard as complicated, but entirely logical, revolves around a corpse, a coffin, and stolen money integrated with several rogues and one innocent victim. At the end of the farce, the victim is arrested.

"It's really funny," Bernhard says, although "there are some redeeming qualities to it." For instance, there are some "very interesting statements" relating to police activities "which could be taken directly out of the Watergate hearings, although it was written in 1967," she says.

"Basically, it's a black mask comedy, a reverse," she adds, "and I now find myself laughing at things I never would have dreamed I'd laugh at before."

The cast for "Loot" includes Richard Hawkins, Gwen Jackson, Charles Harrill, Dan Hays and John Savage, all of whom have appeared in leading roles in recent Carnival and University Theater productions.

The play will be performed Friday and Saturday at 8:30 p.m. and again on August 2, 3 and 4. Tickets are \$2, \$2.50 and \$3.

photography

"It was not the intention to record literally what was before us, but rather to infer the qualities of that particular experience." This statement provides the theme for a collection of prints in the photographic gallery in the Art Museum.

The prints are the product of a group of students who traveled throughout Oregon during the first four weeks of summer term.

What they have chosen to present is a collection of abstracts—images they have discovered on the road. If you expect to see a print of an abandoned shed in sagebrush, forget it. Put aside, too, the cliché of the old barn with its bleached wood crumbling under the weight of age.

If they saw the barn, what they chose to show is a piece of that barn, a piece of the weathered grain. They take you in for a closer look.

Bob Greene uses black and white to emphasize the designs he perceives. Texture and composition are enhanced by the use of black and white in his print of cracking fiber on wood.

Faye Adler integrated color with design to produce a striking photograph. The subdued colors provide a contrast which lifts the design from its objective reality to an art form. Peeling paint becomes an explosive movement, a landscape or any number of related subjects.

These are only two prints by two photographers which impressed me. There are more which should be seen. If you think you've seen Oregon, take a look. And look again.

Charlene Yogi

art

McLarty's fantasies urge viewer to 'follow his dream'

A calm, reflective quality pervades the graphic work of Portland artist Jack McLarty, on display in the mezzanine of the EMU until August 3. And the woodcuts, drawings, etchings, and collographs that comprise the show, when they succeed on their own terms, induce a sympathetic state of calm and reflection in the viewer. Each piece, even the most straightforward of the drawings of nudes, is a self-contained fantasy into which the artist, in the role of skillful conjurer, beckons his audience.

The skill just mentioned is a necessary ingredient in achieving this effect, and there can be no doubt that McLarty has it. It's the same skill, as a matter of fact, that the conjurer is admired for, an artifice that gives pleasure without drawing attention to itself.

This skill finds its best expression in the woodcut, a medium that McLarty seems particularly suited to. In "Evening Dreamer," for instance, he creates an image of the state of reflection mentioned above: The dark hair on a woman's head that appears in the bottom half of the print slowly breaks apart as the viewer's eyes move upward, becoming, toward the top, a random pattern of clouds. The main block, which establishes this image, is printed in black, while other blocks give a blue tint to the woman's face and a red tint to the clouds, subtly emphasizing the transformation that is taking place.

Like a good conjurer, McLarty, too, concentrates on a certain repertoire of transformations which, though they may be repeated, never fail to please. He often starts with something as common as a woman's hair, a flowing robe, or curiously static motion of cars on a highway, and precipitates out of the undifferentiated mass and movement a wealth of imagery. Where he does this, the creative process imitates that of dreams, in which images seem to generate themselves out of the darkness of sleep.

One of the most impressive in this category is a large woodcut, "Emerging Woman." The woman of the title is shown putting on (or is it taking off?) a richly decorated oriental robe. In the disarray of her

hair, the mirror she holds, and the decoration of her robe, all of which flow in and out of each other into one organic whole, McLarty has sewn more symbols of transformation and images of woman and (in the mirror, significantly) man. The complexity of this print is such that it simultaneously invites and frustrates the effort to interpret. The artist's work becomes his dream, his fantasy, and though he gives the viewer a look into his own private world, the imagery that appears there can never be interpreted in any one "right" way. That imagery, in its complexity, can only be grasped intuitively.

A certain balance between invitation and frustration is required, and where this balance does not occur, the spell that McLarty casts is broken. There is too much frustration, for instance, in the etching "The Hunter." One "hunts" for the substance in this brown, shadowy world, and comes up with nothing.

The problem of too much invitation is in itself more pervasive and rarely embodied in one work. Some of the graphics suffer from it very little, especially those that use the automobile as a sort of totem. Others, particularly pieces which have an almost erotic quality about them (such as "Night Clock" or the tiny woodcut "Lovers"), are more troubled by it.

In the latter works, the critical viewer becomes too aware that he or she is being seduced by the artist. The "conjuring" that is McLarty's strength becomes a trick, and no one likes to be tricked. The sinuous, Art Nouveau line, the sensuous flesh of the nudes, the total effect becomes a bit too artificial, too stylized, almost, it seems, decadent.

When the poet John Logan visited the University last spring, he spoke of his activity, like McLarty's a specifically creative one, as "following the dream." The dreams McLarty embodies in his prints and drawings must be approached and followed in the way Logan's metaphor suggests, intuitively. But only if they lead somewhere.

Stephen Bangs